

Guidelines for using Consent Agendas

What to include in a consent agenda

- Minutes from a previous meeting
- Informational materials
- Updated organizational documents – future Board agendas/calendars, org charts, administrative updates, etc.
- Monthly and Quarterly reports that have not historically generated any questions or discussion.

Additional Tips

- Ask the following questions to test whether an item should be included in a consent agenda:
 - Is the item self-explanatory and uncontroversial?
 - Is the item “for information only” and doesn’t require a presentation or discussion to add context?

What not to include in a consent agenda

- A consent agenda should never be used to hide important issues or stifle difficult discussions
- Audit findings
- Any items that requires staff to provide further information or context orally.
- Committee decisions

Seven steps to using a consent agenda

1. Set the meeting agenda – the Committee Chair and Committee staff work together to identify what routine items can be included in the consent agenda to create adequate time for the issues that warrant substantive discussions. Consent items should be divided into “Action” and “Information” items so the Committee Members are clear what requires action and what is an informational item.
2. Distribute materials in advance.
3. Read materials in advance – Committee Members must commit to reading materials in advance of the meeting so they are prepared to approve the consent agenda package or ask for specific items to be pulled from the consent agenda for further discussion.
4. Introduce the consent agenda at the meeting.
5. Remove (if requested) an item and accept the remainder of the consent agenda – if a Committee Member requests that an item be removed from the consent agenda (because they have a question, want to discuss an item, or disagree with a recommendation), the Chair removes the item without question or argument and determines if it should be discussed as the next item (e.g., a clarification on the meeting minutes) or at the end of the Committee Agenda to allow staff nominal time to prepare for the discussion.
6. Approve the consent item.
7. Document acceptance of the consent agenda, listing each action item that was approved.

Additional Tip

- “Just a quick question” is not an option when using a consent agenda. Either an item is removed for further discussion or it remains packaged in the consent agenda and approved as bundled.